COOKIA

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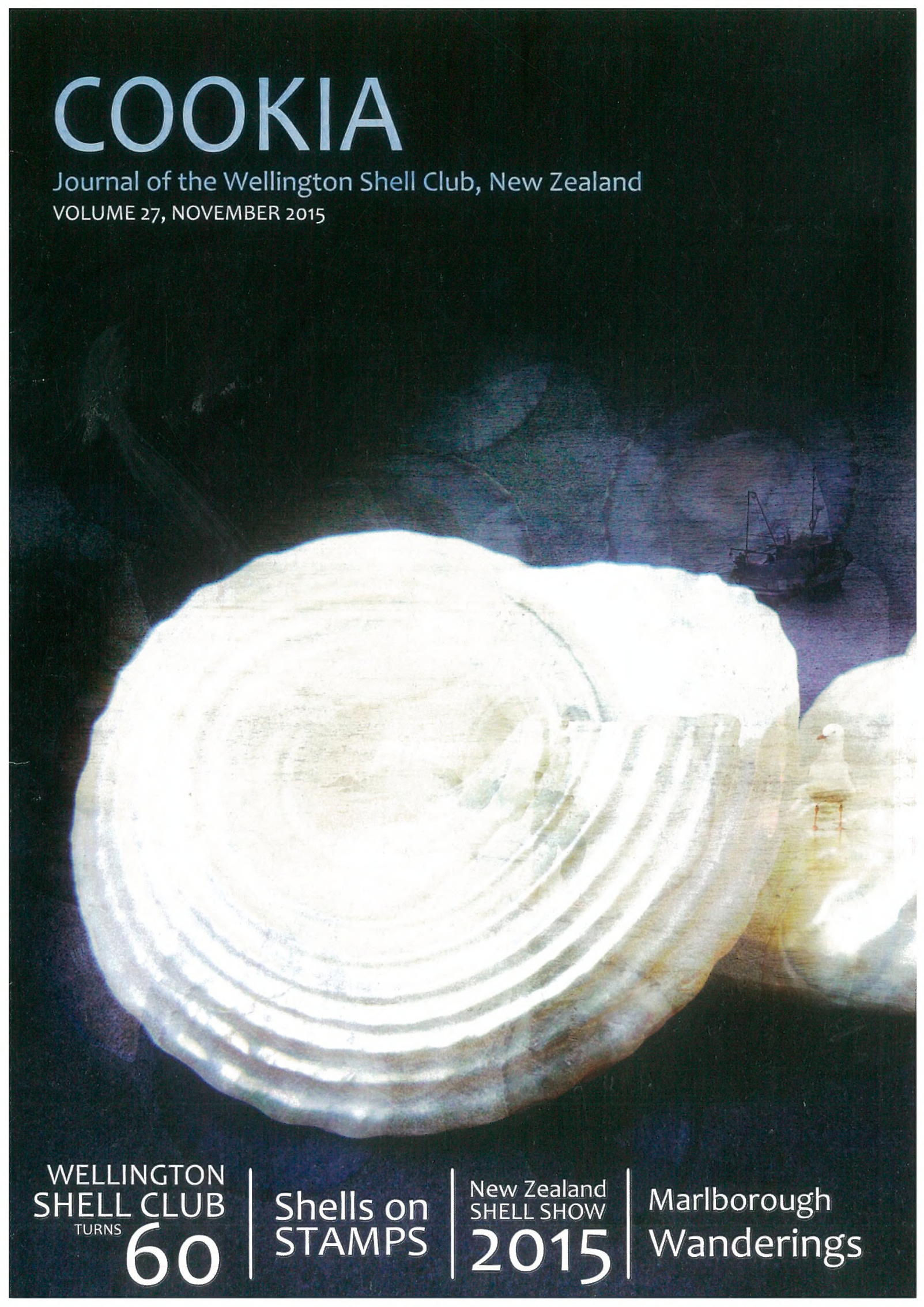

WELLINGTON SHELL CLUB TURNS 60

Shells on STAMPS

New Zealand SHELL SHOW 2015

Marlborough Wanderings

This year's competition

The challenge:

To identify these nine common-to-uncommon New Zealand seashells, preferably without using the hints below. Solutions on the back page.

The Hints:

Top left: Calcareus operculum. Top middle: Has hundreds of eyes. Top right. The largest species in this family. Middle left: A frill to find. Middle: Animal looks like a rose and glows blue in the dark. Middle right: Dredged in 40 m, Tasman Bay. Bottom left: Messy. Bottom middle: A book has one, this shell has many, they protect it as it hunts other shells at night. I: Large deep-water turrid, named as a fossil

Photo on cover: *Gari convexa* - Owenga, Chatham Islands, Pat Lakeman

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Editorial

Wellington Shell Club: this is your jubilee year, your 60th birthday! We have been around as long as scrabble, the New Zealand SAS and Tolkien's *The Return of the King* so congratulations! It is very pleasing too to see our Club flourishing so.

At present we have over 70 members, the largest membership we've ever had. After a highly successful show, we are looking good financially also. The greatest feature of our Club, however, is the way it brings people together. We have so often assembled an amenable and thoroughly agreeable assemblage of folk to share a holiday, a stroll along the beach, stories, knowledge and jokes. This community is invaluable, it is what makes the Wellington Shell Club so lucky and enjoyable and unlike rare shells, it cannot be bought.

This community has a bright future and there are plenty of ways to get involved. Why not write an article for our excellent publication *Cookia*? Report a good wash-up? Organise a field trip? Offer to talk at a meeting? Ask what you might collect for a research project on your trip away? I look forward to seeing our Club continue to grow as we enter our next 60 years!

Diamonds Are Forever

Part two of the Wellington Shell Club's 60-year history - by Jill Burnet

My last account of the doings of the club, gleaned from its newsletters, finished at the end of 1999.

I started the next newsletter with Happy New Year, Happy New Century, Happy New Millennium – how often can you say that! And with the new year, we had a new president – Jenny Raven took over from Don Watson, with Ian Townsend as vice president. The rest of the committee was much the same as previously, with Deirdre Standish as secretary, Elliot Dawson as *Cookia* editor, myself as treasurer and newsletter editor, Kris Woods looking after raffles, and a consortium of Deirdre Standish, Judy Hardie and Pat Lakeman in charge of the library. The new age brought other changes – meetings at Te Papa's new premises in Tory Street, where we were lucky enough to be able to install our library cupboards, and thanks to John Little, a great leap forward into the technological age with internet access to our very own website. Several club members from Wellington and Nelson went on a day trip to Marfells Beach, we had a most enjoyable barbeque at Don Watson's place, and finished the year with a weekend trip to Don's bach at Te Awaite.

The same committee was re-elected for 2001, and immediately got stuck into plans and preparations for our 2002 shell show. This continued throughout the year, but we still found time for an outing to Island Bay – unfortunately it was too windy to cross to the island as we had planned. In January 2002 our efforts culminated in a successful shell show, from which the club gained some new members. Sadly we lost Capt. Ed Busby this month, and a couple of months later we heard of the death of Dick Dell, two people who had given much to the club and, in the case of Dr Dell, had been instrumental in starting it and getting it on its feet. At Easter, several of our members went up to Mahia, earlier in March there was an outing to Moa Point, and our April meeting was converted to a picnic and shell hunt at Whitireia Park. We again finished the year with a weekend at Don Watson's bach at Te Awaite. There was a bit of re-shuffle of the committee for 2003 – Jenny Walton took on the Treasurer's job, Deirdre Standish became librarian as well as secretary, Doreen Burr the vice president, and Selwyn Bracegirdle joined the committee.

We had a busy year with a barbeque at Don Watson's place, a trip to Oteranga Bay, an extra, special issue of *Cookia* comprising shell lists from Lower North Island beaches compiled by Jenny Raven, a trip to Cape Campbell, a shell auction, and a barbeque in honour of Pat Bail and Allan Limpus who were in New Zealand researching material for their volute book. With Doreen Burr and Selwyn Bracegirdle as co-vice presidents, the same committee steered us through 2004. We started with the South Coast Shell Challenge, though many of the weird and wonderful entries certainly weren't

Shell Show
The Wellington Shell Club proudly presents
The 4th New Zealand Shell Show
- Rare and Beautiful Worldwide Shells
- Educational and Scientific Displays
- Shell Art and Craft
- Shells and Shell Books for Sale
Saturday, 26th January 2002, 9am to 5pm
Sunday, 27th January 2002, 10am to 4pm
Lower Hutt Town Hall,
Laings Road, Lower Hutt
Adult $2, Child $1, family $5
For more information contact Deirdre (04) 938 6554 or
www.actrix.gen.nz/users/littlejn/

Various club members have made trips to the Chatham Islands over the years: here are Carolyn Krebs (left) and Jenny Raven, with local canine friend. Photo: Pat Lakeman.

SHELL AUCTION
SATURDAY 30 AUGUST 2003
JOHNSONVILLE COMMUNITY HALL
JOHNSONVILLE, WELLINGTON
CNR FRANKMORE AND MOOREFIELD AVES - ENTRANCE IN MOOREFIELD AVE
VIEW LOTS AND SALES TABLES 9.00AM TO 12.30PM
AUCTION STARTS 1.00PM
NEW ZEALAND AND FOREIGN SHELLS, BOOKS, ART, MATERIAL FOR CRAFTS, AND SO MUCH MORE
IN AUCTION AND ON SALES TABLES
YOU COULD EVEN START YOUR OWN SHELL COLLECTION!
WELLINGTON SHELL CLUB

shells. We visited the shellfish hatchery at Mahanga Bay, there was an outing to Plimmerton, a meeting at NIWA, Margaret Morley published her book, *A Photographic Guide to Seashells of New Zealand*, and we enjoyed a weekend at Don Watson's bach at Te Awaite. At the end of the year Elliot Dawson resigned from the job of *Cookia* editor – he was made a life member in recognition of many years of sterling work – and Selwyn Bracegirdle took over the role.

60 Years of Presidents

1955 -1967	No formal election of officers considered necessary until November 1967. Meetings chaired by Dick Dell during this time.
1968-1974	Bill Paul
1975-1976	Pete Cresswell
1977-1979	Trevor Ritzema
1980	Betty Andrews
1981	Bowen Francis
1982-1986	Peter Jamieson
1987-1989	Capt. Ed Busby
1990-1999	Don Watson
2000-2011	Jenny Raven
2012-2015	Pat Lakeman

At the beginning of 2005, we held a display at Petone Settlers Museum, we had an outing to Green Point, and in May we celebrated our 50th anniversary with a weekend of activities. There was a trip to the Bay of Plenty at Queen's Birthday weekend, and by spring we were thinking about fund raising for our next shell show. Selwyn Bracegirdle did a great job with his first edition of *Cookia*, so he and the rest of the committee were re-elected for another year. 2006 started with the launch of Alan Limpus' and Pat Bail's book on volutes, we had an outing to Waikawa Beach, in March we met Gary and Bernice Schmelz who became club members, in May we heard about the trip to Stewart Island – the 'shells' collected included a dolphin skull, and throughout the year there was a focus on the coming shell show. The same committee soldiered on for another year, though with Pat Lakeman as librarian and Jenny Walton taking over running the website from John Little.

I wrote in the February newsletter that the shell show had been a great success but I couldn't bear to look at another shell. In spite of this we were all out on the beach in April hunting for entries for the Kapiti Coast Seashell Challenge. At the end of July, there was a dredging trip at Cissy Bay, thanks to our members on the spot, John Bottomley and Kevin and Yvonne Mead. October was a very busy month, with several members away on a trip to the Chatham Island, while those of us left behind explored Eastbourne Beach, and in November there was an outing to Island Bay. The same committee was returned by popular acclaim for 2008, and Selwyn Bracegirdle organised an unusual competition – the best part of a year to find the biggest *Dicathais orbita* (Gmelin, 1791) or the frilliest *Bassina yatei* (Gray, 1835). In June, Ken Piech from Tennessee joined us and became a very enthusiastic collector during his time in New Zealand. The Taputeranga Marine Reserve came into effect in September, and we held a shell auction in October.

At the AGM the same popular committee was voted in once again, and we started 2009 with a barbecue at the home of Pat Lakeman and Graham Aamodt. In February, we turned up at Lorraine Foster's place with bags of sandy shells for another Kapiti Coast Seashell Challenge.

Images from the NZ Shell Show 2007 at the Lower Hutt Town Hall including a fine exhibit of NZ shells entered by Jenny Raven, entries in the children's colouring competition, and many familiar faces (most looking a bit younger). Photos: Pat Lakeman.

Earlier in February members had collected rather different shells at the Catlins and Stewart Island, and in August there was a trip to Marfell's Beach and Cape Campbell attended by 13 members from various parts of the country. Yet again, the same committee was re-elected and immediately started planning for a shell show in 2011. There was a club trip to Motueka at Easter, and in June Jenny Raven and Selwyn Bracegirdle launched their book *New Zealand Seashells Visual Guide* to great applause. In September we had a shell hunt competition at the home of Deirdre Standish, and at the AGM Deirdre stood down as secretary after many years of pen pushing in our service, and Kerry Walton took on the job.

By the end of February 2011, another shell show was over successfully, and we were all saying "Thank goodness, that's it – never again!" How short memories are! Our next event was a field trip to East Cape, the club library bought a copy of Huber's *Compendium of Bivalves* – a very weighty volume, and at the end of the year the same old committee warned that it did not want to be the 'same old' any longer, and we needed to have some changes. Pat Lakeman became president, with Kris Woods as vice president and Jenny Raven as Treasurer. Mary Agnes Wotton took over the library, Pat Lakeman and Kerry Walton took on the demanding job of *Cookia* editors, Kerry continued as secretary, myself as newsletter editor, and Kris kept on her good work with the sales table and raffles. Our new shell cleaning machine was demonstrated at a meeting at Paul Ellison's home early in the year. Later on, we had an outing to Lake Wairarapa to look for freshwater shells followed by a meeting at the Keil home in Masterton, and by the end of the year we were planning fund raising for our next shell show. Practice makes perfect, and the same committee was elected for 2013, but with Roger Woods taking over the website from Jenny Walton who had done so much to improve it. Sadly we lost Jenny Walton and Vic Vercoe this year, in 2012 we had heard of the deaths of Jenny Shave and John Little – a big loss of members for our small club.

Ian Townsend raised the possibility

60 Years of Secretaries

1955 -1967	No formal election of officers considered necessary until November 1967. Secretarial duties carried out by Bill Paul during this time.
1968	Mr Mathieson
1969-1972	Ruth Adams
1973	Joan Beu
1974-1975	Mrs Wood
1976	John Marston
1977	John Marston and Betty Wolf
1978-1979	John Marston
1980	Rod Sudlow
1981-1982	Barbara Sutherland
1983-1985	Eric Scott
1986	Barbara Sutherland
1987	Anita Long
1988	Anita Long/John Nunn
1989-1992	John Nunn
1993	No appointment
1994-1995	Jenny Raven
1996-1998	John Marston
1999-2010	Deirdre Standish
2011-2014	Kerry Walton
2015	Kerry Walton and Jill Burnet

NEW ZEALAND
SHELL SHOW 2011
DISPLAYS TO VIEW + SHELLS & BOOKS FOR SALE
9.00am - 5.00pm Saturday 12 February 2011
9.00am - 4.00pm Sunday 13 February 2011
Adult $3 / Child $1
Lower Hutt Town Hall
Enquiries to Deirdre on 04 9041080 (Wellington Shell Club)

Shell show publicity got more sophisticated over the years—the poster above designed by Selwyn Bracegirdle. Truly delicious pot luck meals continue to be a feature of club AGMs - below is a group tucking in at the 2007 AGM.

Above: Members past and present gathered to enjoy the celebration of the club's 60th anniversary.

Top: Margaret Richards (nee Crozier) and Denis Fairfax chat with founder member Winston Ponder, now of Sydney; Selwyn Bracegirdle, Bruce Marshall, Doreen Burr and Alan Beu discuss some evidence of club history; and Don Watson, Pat Lakeman and Jenny Raven (who together comprise over 30 years of tenure as club presidents) cut the cake as we all wished for many more years for this happy and vibrant club.

that we might have a shell display at Nga Manu Nature Reserve in Waikanae, and a subcommittee was formed for this project, and in August Selwyn Bracegirdle held a Big Shell Sale at his home. In March, Pat Lakeman had advised that she was planning a trip to the Chatham Islands – 8 places only available – and in December the lucky group had a very happy time on the Chathams and made some interesting finds. The same committee continued into 2014, and was very pre-occupied with planning the 2015 shell show – this was even more stressful than usual because we had to find a new venue for the show.

Early in the year we visited Nga Manu Nature Reserve and were very impressed with our shell display, and we heard of the death of John Bottomley of Cissy Bay. The year passed in a blur of show preparation which fell into place in January 2015 in a show which was much more successful than we could have imagined. After the show, Elliot Dawson and I had only a few short months to finish the new index of *Cookia*. We had been thinking about this for years: eventually I sat down with pen, paper and *Cookias*, Elliot fished out his records of the previous index and worked long and patiently inserting the new material. The third party in the equation was Elliot's computer, and I'm afraid it was not 100% behind us. It obviously felt it was being overworked and underpaid, and retaliated with random acts of sabotage – for instance totally on its own initiative with no consultation whatsoever, it decided that 'fossiling' was not an activity it had heard/approved of, and that 'gossiping' would be more appropriate. You can see where this is leading – all errors are the fault of the computer but we will try and correct any that you find.

In May, we celebrated our 60th anniversary with a great gathering of past and present members. I produced the new *Cookia* index, with a suitable fanfare, and was so disappointed that Elliot couldn't be there with me. However, we were thrilled to have come, all the way from Australia, a foundation member – Winston Ponder, as a lad of 13, was there 60 years ago. I for one feel that we have a very special club and that it is thanks to the eight people who got together to start it, and to all those who have come and gone through 60 years of fun, friendship and shells.

Photos this and facing page: Graham Aamodt and Pat Lakeman.

Shells on Stamps

By Peter Pienaar & Pat Lakeman

On 6 May 2015, NZ Post released a pictorial issue of five stamps featuring seashells endemic to New Zealand waters: silver paua (*Haliotis australis*), Scott's murex (*Rolandiella scotti*), golden volute (*Provocator mirabilis*), fan shell (*Talochlamys gemmulata*) and opal top shell (*Cantharidus opalus*). This is a rare event! The history of NZ philately stretches back to 1855 and since then, NZ Post estimates that they have created over 730 different stamp issues - but this is only the second issue to exclusively feature shells. The other, two-part issue, in 1978 (four stamps) and 1979 (two stamps), depicted our paua (*Haliotis iris*), toheroa (*Paphies ventricosa*), the coarse dosinia (*Dosinia anus*), spiny murex (*Poirieria zelandica*), scallop (*Pecten novaezelandiae*) and the circular saw shell (*Astraea heliotropium*). Mollusca in general, however, have had somewhat wider coverage in our stamp issues, as Peter Pienaar notes below.

How topics get chosen for a stamp issue can be a complicated process, and the result depends on several factors. NZ Post says they judge what's suitable for a stamp issue based on its relevance to New Zealand events, history, culture, people or flora/fauna. They take into account any requests received for stamp issue themes or topics from the public, and how recently the topic has already been covered. They also try to balance stamp releases between traditional issues that collectors will love (flora, fauna, history) and issues which appeal to a wider audience (such as the ICC Cricket World Cup 2015). For our New Zealand shell stamps, Bruce Marshall chose the subjects on all stamps in both series; all the shells are museum specimens.

The 2015 Native Seashells issue, with denominations 80c, $1.40, $2.00, $2.50 and $3.00, has the added distinction of having descriptive notes in the presentation pack and Limited Edition written by club member and *Cookia* co-editor Kerry Walton. These are a very enjoyable and informative read, both about seashells and molluscs in general, and the individual species featured. Among other things, Kerry tells us that the *T. gemmulata* specimen portrayed came from the wreck of the *Wahine* in Wellington Harbour and that *C. opalus* was the first organism unique to New Zealand to be scientifically illustrated and recorded.

Shells on stamps have had a mention in *Cookia*'s pages before – a short tongue-in-cheek piece by then departing editor Elliot Dawson as he completed his last *Cookia* in 2004. "How to Collect Rare Shells – the Easy Cheap Way?" was his title; when he first became fascinated by them he estimated there were only some hundreds of such stamps around. By 2004 that number had grown - Tom Walker's 2003 assessment on the website of the British Shell Collectors' Club was over 5000 shell stamps, produced by some 230 countries, depicting over 900 identifiable species in addition to shells appearing in borders or backgrounds. Bev Elliott is another current club member with an extensive collection of "shell stamps" – she too notes that many of the molluscs to have appeared have included squids, sea slugs, octopus, nudibranchs and land snails as well as the more obvious 'sea shells'.

Below: The 2015 Native Seashells issue of New Zealand stamps. Photo: NZ Post.

Sydney-based club member Peter Pienaar writes that he first started collecting shells on stamps when he bought a collection of stamps at a shell show in Auckland. He thought stamps would be a logical supplement to his conchology hobby (although those particular stamps turned out to be mostly useless as they were faded from exposure to sunlight, which only became apparent to Peter when he started to collect new stamps). Peter continues:

"The first shell on a postage stamp was in 1859, when the Bahamas issued a stamp featuring a stylised drawing of the Queen conch (*Lobatus gigas*) on it. Up to 1950, stamps with shells on them all featured crude drawings of shells, mostly the Shankha or sacred conch of India (*Turbinella pyrum*), queen conch or a scallop. Ryukyu, a chain of islands between Japan & Taiwan (Okinawa is one of them) issued the first stamp with detailed shells on it in 1950: the 5 yen stamp featured a stromb, a spider conch and a pecten (*Conomurex luhuanus*, *Lambis lambis* and *Decatopecten radula*). Popular shell themes are cone shells, cowries and land snails (Cuba has many stamps depicting the latter).

There are well in excess of 6000 stamps world-wide that have a mollusc connection of some sort on them. What constitutes a shell on a stamp? Well, we should really say molluscs on stamps, since many stamps feature octopus, squid, or nautilus (cephalopods) and sea slugs (nudibranchs), as well as land snails and chitons – all of which can be overlooked when people think of 'seashells'. Fossils also feature, mainly ammonites.

The stamps themselves may have only a single shell on them, such as New Zealand's 2015 issue, or a number of shells such as the cluster featured on the Cook Islands 1972 $4.00 stamp. The shell may be a drawing, a representation or a photograph, and in many cases are only incidental to the stamp. For example the British stamp of 1981 to commemorate the royal wedding has a scallop appearing in the border. A similar example is the 1969 Dubai fish stamps issue where shells feature in the border of each stamp. An extreme example is the 1972 Australian Country Women's Association stamp which shows a cameo: the shell connection being that during the European Renaissance (14th–17th centuries) shell cameos became prevalent. The species most used in good-quality cameos since the late 19th century has been *Cypraecassis rufa*, the bull mouth helmet.

Shells on stamps from Australia are rather disappointing. The earliest issue was in 1936 featuring Amphititre (the Greek mythological Queen of the Sea, daughter of Nereus, wife of Poseidon and Mother of Triton - thank you Google!) – standing on a scallop. One of the 2006 Dangerous Australians stamp series depicted a blue-ringed octopus (*Hapalochlaena lunulata*). With relatively few issues of Australian stamps featuring shells, one wonders why Australia's unique volutes, or *Zoila* and *Umbilia* cowries, have not appeared. There are however many issues of shells on stamps from the Australian dependencies such as Cocos Keeling Islands and Christmas Island, but they typically feature common Indo-Pacific species.

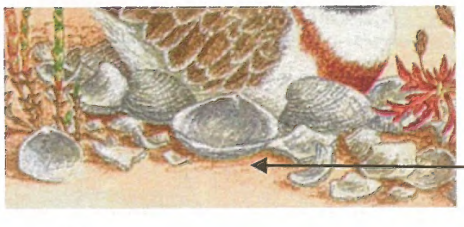
World-wide there is plenty of material to choose from, not least because many small countries such as the Maldive Islands and Solomon Islands, and some African countries, issue vast numbers of topical stamps,

the sale of which forms an important part of their GDP. Most shell stamps are inexpensive, easy to obtain and can be sourced from stamp dealers, auction houses and the internet. There is not a lot of reference material available: *Collect Shells on Stamps* from Stanley Gibbons catalogued stamps up to 1995, and subsequently Tom Walker (the author of the Stanley Gibbons publication) produced *Shells on Stamps* (updated: October 2008)."

"Shells on stamps" has been a competition category at a number of shell shows, including NZ shows. Club members Jenny Raven and Heather Smith have both exhibited some very beautiful displays in this class. Conchology, Inc – the website of Guido and Philippe Poppe at http://www.conchology.be/ - has a great stamp gallery (by country) and contains a link to related site http://www.poppe-stamps.com/, which has hundreds of stamps for sale featuring shells, as a subset of their 'marine life' collecting theme. And a search for "shells" on the Stanley Gibbons website www.stanleygibbons.com gets you over 2000 results to look at.

Below: Displays of shells and stamps that won the Conchologists of America Award for Heather Smith at shell shows in 2015 (left) and 2013.

Photos: Heather Smith.



Thanks to NZ Post for their help with this article. Go to www.nzpost.co.nz for information about and images of New Zealand shells.

List of all NZ stamps showing molluscs

1967 Centenary of the Royal Society of NZ – the 4c stamp has an *Alcithoe arabica* in left margin.

1978 Resources of the sea: the 35c stamp features *Architeuthis dux*.

1978/9 Definitive issue in two parts, comprising 20c *Haliotis iris*, 30c *Paphies ventricosa*, 40c *Dosinia anus*, 50c *Poirieria zealandica*, $1 *Pecten novaezelandiae*, $2 *Astraea heliotropium*.

1981 Health stamps: Children playing by the sea – on the miniature sheet of six stamps there are stylised limpets in left and right sheet margins.

1988 Birds issue: on the 10c stamp there are bivalve shells surrounding a Banded Dotterel's nest.

1993 Endangered species: a sheet of four 45c stamps, one of which features *Powelliphanta lignaria*.

1993 Fish/NZ fishing industry – a block of ten 45c stamps of which three featured paua (*Haliotis iris*), greenshell mussel (*Perna canaliculus*) and squid.

1994 Kiwiana: a block of ten 45c stamps included one depicting a paua (*Haliotis iris*).

1995 "Protect the Environment" was the message of this set of ten 45c stamps, in which one design included greenshell mussels (*Perna canaliculus*).

1996 A Seashore set of ten 40c stamps with overlapping designs included depictions of limpets, a sea slug, a 'gaudy nudibranch', a snake skin chiton (*Sypharochiton pelliserpentis*), the cat's eye shell (*Lunella smaragda*) and the common octopus.

1997 Discoverers of NZ – the $1 stamp portrays a Maui fishhook carved from shell.

1997 Insects and creepy crawlies – in this set of ten 40c stamps, two feature molluscs: a giant land snail (*Powelliphanta* sp.) and a veined slug (*Athoracophorus bitentaculatus*).

1998 Town icons – one of the ten 40c stamps in this issue shows a paua (*Haliotis iris*) sculpture, the icon of Riverton.

1998 Underwater world: two sets of four stamps, one of the 40c values featuring the giant squid (*Architeuthis dux*).

2000 The Kiwiana II issue comprised ten 40c stamps, one of which, entitled "pipis" depicts a kiwi sitting in what appears to be a ringed dosinia (*Dosinia anus*).

2001 The Art from Nature series includes a 90c stamp featuring paua (*Haliotis iris*).

2002 Holiday hideaways series includes a 40c stamp with a paua shell (*Haliotis iris*) in the design.

2009 Giants of NZ: the $1 stamp depicts the colossal squid (*Mesonychoteuthis hamiltoni*).

2010 Ancient Reptiles of NZ series – the $2.30 stamp shows a *Moanasaurus* about to eat a squid.

2014 Endangered Seabirds: $1.40 stamp shows a Fairy Tern on sand with half-buried shells.

2015 Kiwi Kitchen: this series includes an 80c stamp depicting a Bluff oyster (*Ostrea chilensis*).

2015 NZ Native Seashells issue featuring the silver paua (*Haliotis australis*) 80c, Scott's Murex (*Rolandiella scotti*) $1.40, golden volute (*Provocator mirabilis*) $2, fan shell (*Talochlamys gemmulata*) $2.50 and opal top shell (*Cantharidus opalus*) $3.

Compiled by Peter Pienaar

Notes on NZ Collected Species

Umbraculum umbraculum (Lightfoot, 1786)

A live specimen found at Taupo Bay, Northland on 1 September 2015. This unexpected find was out of the water at low tide on coralline weed surrounding a rock pool. It was found by almost putting my hand on it while inspecting a pool for shells – it blended in perfectly with the surrounding weed and, never having seen a live *Umbraculum* specimen before, I wondered what this large slug was - till I noted the shell on top. I will now look out for these creatures in future.

JENNY RAVEN

Bullina lineata (Gray, 1825)

My grandson & his father have been finding these shells washed up on various beaches in the Tutukaka Harbour: 5 during 2014, of which 3 are in reasonable condition, at the Tutukaka Marina Beach (2), Church Bay (1) and Kowhawera Beach (2). I understand from other members of Whangarei Shell Club that they tend to wash up in the Tutukaka Harbour but mainly around spring time. We will be paying Tutukaka a bit of attention during spring 2015, as this is a shell I have yet to find.

ERIC SCOTT

Poirieria zelandica

(Quoy & Gaimard, 1833)

Although not uncommon on the Kapiti Coast, this 49 mm beauty, found by Jason Plaisted earlier in 2015 at the Waikanae River Mouth is about the best beach collected specimen I can recall seeing from this locality.

KERRY WALTON / JASON PLAISTED

Calliostoma tigris (Gmelin, 1791)

Our last issue reported a very handsome *C. tigris* that had been dredged off Kaingaroa, Chatham Islands and is in the collection of Graham Aamodt. Not to be outdone – and not long after Graham and others visited Kevin and Judy Burch in May this year – KB acquired this absolute beauty of a specimen. It is a new record size at 104 mm x 97 mm. The previous record specimen was 101 mm and is held by the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa. Kevin takes up the story:

This giant specimen was taken by a tame trawler man from a depth of 180 – 200 m, approximately 27 nautical miles off the west coast of Northland, on the edge of a papa/rock shelf while trawling for terakihi. The skipper mentioned to me a couple of times that he had bought up a large colourful thin and striped shell which he had saved for me: he kept forgetting to bring it home off the vessel, but had given us a brief description of it (most of you know how poor some descriptions can be). So from his comments about the size, colouration etc., I thought he had a small *Tonna* specimen or something similar. Imagine my surprise when the boat finally returned to home port and while I was sorting out a few electrical repairs (my job is Auto & Marine Electrician), my friend pulls out this huge *C. tigris* and says "KB this is that shell I told you about". In these situations one has to hide one's excitement otherwise, in some cases, the value can become excessive.

I was completely blown away as the shell was far larger than any I had ever seen, despite my having a good collection of *Calliostoma* shells, some of which I first found in the Whangarei Harbour as a youngster 50 years ago. I have dive collected many very good specimens over the years, usually up to about 65 mm; some in my collection from cray pots from the Three Kings area are up to 85 mm. So when I got this shell home and cleaned it, then found it measured a massive 104 mm high x 97 mm wide, we became even more thrilled. It turned out that crew had fished two shells out of the net, the one I have and another second shell which was even larger but broken, which "they threw back". When the first one got smelly they gutted it, throwing away the operculum in the process. There is now a largish heavy duty plastic container on board with a wide, screw-on lid to accommodate (hopefully) any future surprises. On phoning my friend Bruce at Te Papa, I learnt that this is the largest specimen ever recorded. The boat has returned to the area, unfortunately snagging its net doing considerable damage, and alas, no more *C. tigris* yet.

KEVIN BURCH

Splendrillia larochei Powell, 1940

This fine specimen measures 15 mm x 5 mm and was found on the high tide line at Tokerau Bay in May 2015.

KATHY CARSON

Haliotis virginea virginea Gmelin, 1791

Collected December 2014 at Waipapa Point under rocks on gravel at low tide, at the end of the lagoon on the south side of the lighthouse. The shells measure about 40 mm. The animals have been given to the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa.

JENNY RAVEN

Kevin Mead found his *Haliotis virginea virginea* "under the house" (in my home that's the basement! – Ed.). Kevin and Yvonne live perched on the edge of Hallam Cove, Pelorus Sound, at Cissy Bay—about 12 nautical miles from the open ocean, so Kevin never considered the area a likely site for *H. virginea virginea* until Kerry Walton found a live specimen at nearby Te Towata during a "king tide" (very low and high tides, usually occurring in spring) in August. During another king tide at the end of September, Kevin was rewarded by finding 11 live specimens within an area of 50 m on the rocky foreshore just to the west of his home. The next day he spotted another 19 live specimens within a 150 m stretch of foreshore further west at Kettle Point. Clearly this species is established in the area; their sizes ranged from 25 mm to 38 mm and they were found under rocks below the normal low tide line.

Globisinum drewi (Murdoch, 1899)

April 2014 might have been a good month for these prized shells on the Kapiti Coast: Jason Plaisted found an excellent 35 mm wide specimen (below left) and on the same day Kerry Walton found three fragments. Also in April, Vivienne Robertson was rewarded for her regular searches on the Kapiti Coast by finding a very good example (below right), 27 mm across, on the high tide line at Raumati South.

Aplysia extraordinaria

(Allan, 1932)

These large sea hares (below left) were photographed at Paua, Parengarenga Harbour in May 2015. They were quite numerous and large (the wet-boot on the foot in the photo is 305 mm long) and, when disturbed, gave off red-purple ink. This species can grow to more than 400 mm in length. It is quite common at times in some of the large bays and inlets along the NSW coast of eastern Australia. It is rather sad to see them as large blobs stranded at low tide when they are spectacular "in flight" – compare the living specimens (below right) photographed by Bill Rudman, at Port Stephens, NSW, in 1980.

Sea hares are herbivores; *Aplysia* species can reach 750 mm & weigh up to 2 kilograms – among the largest gastropods in the world. Our thanks to Richard Willan (Dr Willan is Senior Curator, Molluscs at the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Australia) for help with identification, which he based on their very enlarged oral tentacles, small rhinophores placed well back on the head, extremely large parapodia connected low down posteriorly, narrow foot, and dark 'veining'.

PAT LAKEMAN & GRAHAM AAMODT

The long & the short of it - *Suteria ide* (Gray, 1850)

This little shell appeared in leaf litter collected and given to me by Vivienne Robertson, and was collected from Wainuiomata. To produce the composite photo required three separate shots, and the blackening out of the background took a lot of patience and about 3 hours of work - THE LONG OF IT. Having spent quite some time unsuccessfully identifying this little 1.5 mm critter, I got the photograph away to Bruce Marshall at Te Papa by way of an email at 1.20pm. At 1.23pm the reply came back - THE SHORT OF IT - together with an identification as a juvenile *Suteria ide* (Gray, 1850) in the family CHAROPIDAE. Thank you Bruce for being very helpful and incredibly fast with your reply. It is said that if you want something done, go to a busy person. FRED KEIL

Murexsul octogonus (Quoy & Gaimard, 1833)

By Kevin Burch

This outsized specimen was crabbed and taken from a deep water crayfish pot, from the Three Kings area in the late 1980s by Mr Allan Howell on his cray fishing boat. The shell was given to Mrs Mary Sanson, an elderly collector and mutual friend from the Whangarei Shell Club, who in turn swapped it to me in August 1995, knowing of my keen interest in Muricidae. Initially I thought this shell to be a specimen of a Pacific species due to its very large size and structure: it measures an incredible 89.88 mm height x 48 mm wide, and there is possibly up to another 5 mm missing due to the broken protoconch.

This shell was photographed and featured in the NZ Muricidae paper written by Bruce Marshall in 2000. It is the largest *M. octogonus* ever recorded and makes one wonder how large they may grow, possibly over 100 mm. One of the interesting features of this specimen is the very open posterior aperture next to the siphonal canal (pseudoumbilicus) and the very splayed siphonal fasciole.

Blackened shells

By Ian Townsend

Black shells: we tend to dismiss them as just stained because they are often found amongst flood debris. A few years back we had a club member who made a point of collecting them, "just to be different". Maybe Digby Standish had a point. I have also been one of those collectors who tossed them aside as being useless That is, until last week (14 July 2015) when I picked up a modest-sized (width 18 mm) *Tanea zelandica* (Quoy & Gaimard, 1832) with a black band on it. This made me think this could not be simple staining but something that was laid down as the mantle produced shell material for growth. It looked as if this shell began a normal life for a couple of whorls and then just a portion of the mantle began producing black pigment; this continued for about half a whorl and then the shell appeared to recover to grow normally again. But I was wrong! My thanks to Bruce Marshall who examined my shell under the microscope to determine that the discolouration is indeed on the surface of the shell. It is not incorporated into the shell structure - it can be scraped off.

Finding a relative of *Zemelanopsis trifasciata* (Gray, 1843) in Greece

by Bert van Tiggele

Sometimes you find shells and don't know what to do with them. It happened to me, with some shells from the beach of Paros, one of the many small islands of Greece in the Mediterranean Sea.

In 1989 I visited the different Ionian Islands of Greece, on a holiday trip and Paros was one of them. During that holiday I was collecting sea shells. Later at home I could not identify a few shells, so they went into a drawer of my shell cupboards for a long time. Only this year, I found an article about the wide distribution of the family Melanopsidae around the Mediterranean Sea and the distribution of *Melanopsis buccinoidea* (Olivier, 1801) in Greece.

My conclusion was that my shells from Paros were *Melanopsis buccinoidea*, (Figure 1). There is considerable disagreement about how many species of *Melanopsis* exist in this region (Heller *et al.* 2005) but I have followed the NMR (Natuur Museum Rotterdam, in the Netherlands) for the name of the shells from Paros, this museum has this shell in its picture gallery!

The shell is smooth and ovate, the spire is short and the last whorl is large. Both shells of *M. buccinoidea* are about 15 mm long and 12 mm wide. Around the Mediterranean, it is a common freshwater species in Turkey, Jordan, Israel, Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, Cyprus as well as the eastern part of Greece and on the islands between Greece and Turkey. They are also found in brackish waters or waters with a variable salinity.

Closely similar taxa with smooth shells are found in New Zealand: *Zemelanopsis trifasciata* (Gray, 1843) (Figure 2) and in New Caledonia: *Melanopsis frustulum* Morelet, 1856. Both are endemic to their countries. Melanopsidae is a widespread family of freshwater gastropods with species native to southern and eastern Europe, northern Africa, parts of the Middle East, New Zealand, and freshwater streams of some large South Pacific islands. They can feed on detritus or algae growing on hard surfaces. The sexes are separate and reproduction occurs several times throughout the multi-year life of the snail.

It was a big surprise for me that the *Z. trifasciata*, which I have found on Tahunanui Beach in Nelson, were a relative of my shell finds in 1989, from Greece!

Figure 1 (left): *Melanopsis buccinoidea*, (Olivier 1801), Greece

Figure 2 (right): *Zemelanopsis trifasciata* (Gray, 1843), New Zealand

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NZ Shell Show 16-18 January 2015

By Graham Aamodt AKA The Sheriff

On this occasion the national shell show was held at the Petone Club on Udy Street, Petone. Sadly, our usual venue, the Lower Hutt Town Hall, did not come up to scratch with regard to the updated seismic code standards, and was therefore closed for strengthening and upgrade - thanks Christchurch.

As the Sherriff of the show I am responsible for the set up layout for all of the exhibitor displays, dealer tables and club sales and craft tables. Everything had to be right as per the CAD layout drawings provided to the manager of the Petone Club. The other main task of the Sherriff is to meet each exhibitor/trader and provide them with their 'goodie bag' containing display registration details, location maps and show information and of course answer any queries (and ensure that they set up in the correct place). Pat and I also had a few signs, including the large banner, to place in and around the main entrance to the Petone Club.

On the Friday morning of set up, I was quite anxious that everything would go smoothly – I need not have worried. The day dawned overcast with a strong wind, sometimes gusting at 80 kph – the forecast was for much the same weather for the whole weekend. Arriving at the Club I quickly set up the sandwich boards at the main driveway entrance and another just outside the main door. Pat also put up a few signs inside the building, steering folk to the upstairs venue – fortunately there is a lift. It was a relief to see the tables all set up as planned and just a few tweaks were required to be in readiness for the exhibitors and traders.

For the next few hours there was a real hubbub as people from far and wide arrived and all the displays and trading tables were set up – the judging and marking of the displays would occur that night – and everything was made ready for the expected throng of public on the following Saturday and Sunday. I must say that the 167 displays looked impressive. I certainly think that the bar keeps lifting for displays at each show, with some exhibitors coming up with more and more novel and interesting entries.

It was really nice to catch up with all our fellow shelling folk from home and abroad, and in particular our Aussie shell mates Ena Coucum (Yeppoon), Ron Moylan and Peter Pienaar (Sydney), and Rob and Shirley Ellis (Brisbane). We swapped lots of stories catching up with our coming and goings since we last met.

Arriving on the Saturday, Kevin Mead and I had a devil's own job in putting up the main shell show banner as the strong wind kept ripping the tie ends and we finally had to resort to nailing it to the posts. The judges had done a great job overnight and the exhibits were all tagged with rosette awards ready for the public part of the Show. Heather Smith of Auckland swept the awards with numerous firsts as well as the Conchologists of America Award for her scientific and educational display. I was somewhat envious, but also appreciative of the enormous effort put in by Heather to display so many of her top quality shells in just about all classes. It was also great to see our youngest club member, James Raven, aged 8, putting in some very impressive displays.

My self-collected *Haliotis virginea virginea* Gmelin, 1791 won a first prize and remarkably (I think) my Xenophoridae (carrier shells) display also won the Public Choice award. Considering that some other displays had more WOW effect I was really surprised (but chuffed) that it received the most public votes. Pat's display took the Exhibitors' Choice award – so we have two lovely trophies gracing our lounge.

During the Saturday a large number of public attended, with lots of families coming, so the Club's sales table was continually being replenished as lots of full shopping bags left the hall. Fred and Lesley Keil were kept busy with their kids' activities table where they had hordes of kids (and a few adults) gluing together all sorts of shells to create their own shell animals. Going by the laughter all, including the hosts, were having a lot of fun. Jill and Kris were also very busy at our club sales and craft tables, chatting away and selling to the public. And it seemed to me that the other traders were quite busy, with most surrounded by people. Once the venue was closed to the public, the auction and prize giving

NZ Shell Show 2015 (clockwise from top left):

The exhibit hall; James Raven's winning Junior Open General exhibit which helped him secure the Wellington Novice Award; (most of) our exhibitors; the *Bursa verrucosa* (G.B. Sowerby I, 1825) that secured first place in Best NZ Specimen <50 mm for Jill Hayward; Heather Smith with her exhibit which won the Scientific & Educational class & earned her the Conchologists' of America Award.

Photo credits (also next page): Luen Jones, Pat Lakeman

were held in an adjoining room. A number of excellent lots encouraged some very spirited bidding indeed and the auctioneer (me) tried to push bids higher. The sum of over $1200 raised from the auction made a very significant contribution to meeting the costs of the show.

Following the auction, the prize giving ceremony was carried out, with a certain Heather being most prominent in collecting the bounty. Speeches and 'thank you's completed the formalities with the NZ Shell Show baton passed back to Auckland to run the next show in two years' time. The evening rounded off with over 50 shell folk attending a buffet dinner at the Petone Club restaurant.

Sunday was a better day weather-wise and the public were still pouring in. Finally at around 4 pm the Show was over and the hall was cleared, with only the empty tables left to mark the passing of yet another national shell show. Overall, public attendance was down on the previous show at the Lower Hutt Town Hall in 2011, where there was a lot more through traffic and public than at the Petone Club's location. Despite this, I believe the 2015 show was a resounding success, and the Petone Club venue was large enough to meet the needs of the show. The use of the adjoining room was also good, so that people could have a 'time out' area to socialise over a tea or a coffee, without the pressure of the show. The Petone Club staff were very receptive to our needs - the only drawback to the venue itself was the heat build-up in the room – due to the gusty winds we could not fully open windows and doors to let in some fresh air from outside.

The success of the Show was demonstrated by the sale of, I would say, thousands of shells (the club table was just about cleared out), and though the dealers did not give too much away, they did seem happy with their lot. The good outcome was also due to the many club members that volunteered for door sales, to man tables for the club, and help with set up and take down. So a big THANK YOU to all helpers, with special mention to Derrick Crosby in assisting Heather and others with their take down and the many trips back and forth to the car park. Also thanks to Gareth Robins and his team at Leaders Real Estate who kindly sponsored our large street signage and lastly, but by no means least, many thanks to a very active Wellington Shell Club organising committee who made it all possible.

Below: some of our judges at the Show - Stella Withers, Margaret Morley, Ena Coucum, Kerry Walton, Derrick Crosby, Peter Poortman, Ron Moylan; Heather Smith's shell of show *Angaria tyria* (Reeve, 1843).

"After many years of membership I finally got to attend a Shell Show in Wellington. It was wonderful to finally meet all these people whose names I knew well but whom I had never met before. The Show itself was also very inspiring in the way the shells were displayed. Once home again I tackled documenting and presenting my own shell collection with renewed enthusiasm. A very worthwhile weekend and a great credit to the organisers."

GEOFF FOREMAN

"With some trepidation I accompanied Geoff to the Shell Show. I felt my woeful ignorance would be so apparent that no one would want to speak to me. How wrong I was. The welcome was warm and friendly with everyone willing to chat and share. Both the Show itself and the dinner were indeed most enjoyable occasions. It is now with a more discerning eye that I wander in Geoff's wake along the beach."

RAEWYNN FOREMAN

Review: New Zealand living Solemyidae (Bivalvia: Protobranchia). *Molluscan Research* 35 (4): 1-16. K. Walton, 2015. Published online 28 August 2015.

by Elliot Dawson

This is an excellent and enjoyable paper. It shows not only the advances that have been made in descriptive conchology and interpretation over the past hundred years since Henry Suter published his Atlas of plates in 1915 but also demonstrates yet again the role that youthful membership of New Zealand conchology societies can play in the production of pabulum (aka 'intellectual nourishment') for young tyros, several of whom have since acquired international recognition. Kerry Walton, who joined our club as a mere lad, can be very proud of this, his first scientific paper. And we should be proud too – it reflects well on the good fellowship of our club as well as the mentoring of our conchological adviser Dr Bruce Marshall. Now we have a most competent documentation of the local members of a very strange, highly interesting family, the Solemyidae. They are odd in being virtually gutless, one of the five bivalve families that have established a symbiotic association with chemosynthetic, sulphur-oxidising bacteria intracellulary within their gill filaments to support their metabolic needs. (There is a large number of publications now appearing on this topic, most of which are well beyond this reviewer's understanding as one who had more than one attempt to pass Chemistry 101, but it's fascinating to read about the symbiotic relationship whereby the bacteria synthesise organic matter for the solemyid and, in return, are provided with a habitat in which they can derive their own chemical needs). The Atlantic species *S. velum*, whose genome has also been mapped, has now proved to be a model animal for the study of the molecular basis of symbiont-host relationships in marine invertebrates in general.

Kerry has used the latest techniques in this work, comprehensive morphological descriptions, first-rate photographs, notably stacking (a sort of mechanical CAT scanning), scanning electron microscopy, as well as reviewing molecular sequencing achieved to date. As well as the two deeper water species, *Acharax clarificata* Dell, 1995 from 817-1164 m and a new species, *Solemya* (*Zesolemya*) *calypso* Walton, 2015 from 181-192 m - both associated with cold chemical seeps - he differentiates from our old friend *S. (Z.) parkinsonii*, another new species, occurring from intertidal to 195 m, as *S.* (*Z.*) *marshalli*, thereby honouring his mentor.

I met solemyids many years ago when I was working on the dynamics of bivalve burrowing – they possess an equally-odd foot anatomy as well as a y-shaped burrow, which permits the simultaneous acquisition of oxygen and sulphides necessary for the animal's metabolism. Besides the symbiotic behaviour, there's a great deal of basic biology and ecology that we have still to find out about our solemyids. We still need to know more about their sediment relationships and burrowing behaviour at least. Professor Gareth Owen made a start in 1960 during an all-too-brief visit to Portobello Marine Biological Station and Dr Stephen Wing and his colleagues have had a good programme going in Fordland elucidating the part *Solemya parkinsonii* can play in the organic bottom debris of the fiords. We are fortunate, then, that Kerry has helped us to learn so much with his meticulous descriptions and illustrations of our species.

This jolly good paper is available (by email or as paper copy) from the club librarian – grab it for your bedtime reading … you'll be leaping out of bed next morning eager to track down more localities for S. *parkinsonii* and watch what it does - if you can find a live one or two - or you might like to introduce yourself to Kerry's new *S. marshalli* and find out what's different about it.

Marlborough Wanderings

By Bev Elliott

At our Tramping Group meeting in January, I put on the programme Long Point, February 21st. There was already a tramp on that date – well, John's mountain will be there any weekend, but a 0.2 low tide in the middle of the day will not, so I wasn't going to change the date. It wasn't likely to happen anyway. My van's warrant of fitness was due on the 18th, which can take anything up to two weeks, if it is necessary to send away for parts, and the fellow in Christchurch sends the wrong ones … my van and I would likely be grounded that weekend. Then there were the ever-increasing Rules for anyone visiting Ward Beach, including "No Overnight Stopping" … does that mean people? Or vehicles? No sleeping in my van there, but was it permissible to park overnight, and be in a tent somewhere? There is a very unfriendly gate to clamber over, followed by a huge slip to negotiate, and I would need to take my crutches for these two obstacles, though the rest of the walk is mostly very easy.

The weather can be a real problem; last time I camped at Long Point my little tent and I were almost blown off the face of the earth at 3 am, and I had to pack up and beat a hasty retreat with my bare legs getting blasted by gale-force coarse sand. Well, you can do that by the light of a full moon, but this time it would be new moon, and pitch dark. And this time there would be no water, after a prolonged drought, and no wee campfire, cuppa coffee or hot food.

As the weekend approached, my eagerness for adventure diminished under a heap of possible problems. Then all of a sudden, the van had her WoF, and there were three fine days forecast, and three low tides ahead. Nobody from the Tramping Group joined me, even though John's mountain trip was cancelled. I left home at daybreak, Thursday morning, parked at Ward Beach and walked south to the needles. What a notorious place for wind! A few months before, my friend Ailsa had camped there overnight, in order to do sunrise photography; I'd wanted to go with her, but the forecast put me off. Her tent got ripped, and she had a most miserable trip, while I was safe at home. Many times I have been disappointed, after the long walk to the Needles, that the weather was too wild to enjoy it. But on February 19th it was a beautiful calm sunny day, and I could enjoy the rock formations, and the sea, and the seals and birds and the fossil sponges. There was very little to add to the shells I have from this area, but I had a pleasant time looking. Then I walked back to Ward, had a rest and a meal, then put on my heavy pack (including 3 litres of water, which weighs a surprising amount) and I set off north towards Long Point.

I didn't get very far, as a little patch of pine trees looked very tempting, and there would be no shelter anywhere else, and that water was just too heavy to carry. I had a nice quiet night, and then set off before daylight, with just a light pack, for Long Point. A nice find at Chancet Rocks was a live *Modelia granosa*, (Martyn, 1784) freshly washed

View of Long Point; *Modelia granosa* (Martyn, 1784) at Chancet Rocks.

ashore. In all my years of walking the Marlborough Coast, I haven't found a live one before. There were plenty of large dead ones at both Kaikoura and Cape Campbell many years ago, plus plenty of operculums to make them into "live" specimens, but a real live one was a first for me. The animal is black.

My pleasure was soon diminished by a "Private Property No Entry" notice, followed by a "Hazards" notice (these were never there before); well, I wasn't going to turn back after all the planning and effort to get here, but this would have to be my last trip here. You can't get around a short piece of the coast, except at very low tide, and I wanted to be a long way further north by then. The main hazard, that awful gate, was wide open this time, and I was soon across the slip and on my way along the beach to Long Point, with plenty of time before low tide. A good low tide uncovers an amazing amount of area, but there was not a great deal to find, a nice *Notoplax violacea* (Quoy & Gaimard, 1835) being my best find. Three other groups of people were there, gathering kai moana. If you have the right kind of vehicle, and know the right person to ask, you can get there without all that long of a

walk. On the way back, I met the landowner. I would have thought that his mind would be full of dire consequences for this cheeky trespasser, but he couldn't have been nicer … leaving me even more flummoxed about how to interpret rules and notices. He was very impressed that anyone of my age would attempt such a long, lone walk. But apart from the little bit through his place, and the need to be very aware of tide times, it's all very easy. So it won't have to be my last time there.

Back to my little tent, for a mostly good night, but with some disturbance from wind gusts. The pines did not give as much shelter as I thought they would, but anywhere else would have been far worse. At 5 am things were getting a bit too hectic, with tent pegs getting wrenched out of the sandy ground. It was pitch dark, but I had a torch, and by the time I got packed up, it was just light enough to find my way back to Ward, and better shelter in my van … all before sunrise.

After coffee, breakfast, and a rest, I had to decide whether I was going to walk on, to walk Marfells Beach in the wind, or go home. I'm glad I went on, as the wind wasn't bad enough to spoil a pleasant day at Marfells. First I went along behind the dunes to my favourite corner of Lake Grassmere, just in from Clifford Bay jetty. Some amazing birds can be seen here at times – not this time as it was too windy, but I did get a really good look at a single wrybill. Then back along the beach, where my brisk walk slowed a lot after I picked up a *Globisinum drewi* (Murdoch, 1899), a whole one of 26 mm, but all my careful looking yielded only one more, badly broken. There were a lot more shells than usual along this strip of beach. A 220 mm *Perna canaliculus* (Gmelin, 1791), two nice big *Penion sulcatus* (Lamarck, 1816)

Shells from Marfells Beach. Top of page: *Cryptoconchus porosus* (Burrow, 1815).

plus several of their egg masses up to 95 mm (plus the inevitable bits of rubbish!) soon had my bag quite full. There were numerous complete *Irus elegans* (Deshayes, 1854), including a whopper of 55 mm, and inside several of these I found four *Hiatella arctica* (Linnaeus, 1767), which is quite rare at this locality. And several complete *Barnea similis* (Gray, 1835), and one complete *Pholadidea suteri* Lamy, 1926. But at the corner by the campground, and around at Mussel Point (both of which can sometimes be profitable areas), there was next to nothing. You just never know your luck, or lack of.

And one month later, around March 21st, were more low tides, and this time I had Cape Campbell on the tramping programme. Again I was alone. I don't know what sort of tramps the 130+ folk on the Kaikoura Tramping Group list would like to do, but they remain invisible from one year to the next, no matter what is on the programme, with only 10 or 12 who occasionally take part in a tramp. I set off on Friday 20th. There is a corner by Ure River mouth where a few shells sometimes wash ashore, and I was eager to see what Cyclone Pam had to offer. Absolutely nothing! But I enjoyed watching the big waves, and something black bobbing around away out – a big mussel float, which had washed ashore by the time I came back. No use to me, but I hauled it away up high, in the hope that someone finds it who can make use of it. Next morning I arrived very early at Marfells Beach. Big waves and mediocre weather put me off trying Cape Campbell. My bird corner had six wrybills this time, and a golden plover. The wrybills are delightfully tame little creatures, but the golden plover was very shy. The walk back along Clifford Bay that was so productive last month, yielded nothing. The same for the rest of the beach, except for a short area just before Mussel Point, where I found a nice *Calliostoma pellucidum* (Valenciennes, 1846), a broken *Fusitriton magellanicus laudandus* Finlay, 1926 (a new record for me in this area), a live *Purpurocardia purpurata* (Deshayes, 1854) 41 mm, and a whopper *Monia zelandicus* (Gray, 1843) 70 mm. Sunday I spent in Blenheim, coming back to Marfells Beach for another try on Monday. The waves and the weather had settled to where I could have attempted Cape Campbell and an overnight camp, but I was running out of time, so I settled for a day tramp to "Tidal Point" on the way to Cape Campbell. My bagful of shells looked more like what I used to find there many years ago. A number of nice *Argobuccinum pustulosum* (Lightfoot, 1786) and *Cookia sulcata* (Lightfoot, 1786) (the largest 114 mm), and more *Penion* egg masses, the largest 120 mm. Another egg mass was that of the big sea hare, *Aplysia juliana* (Quoy & Gaimard, 1832), a tangle of yellow/orange strings. A live *Plaxiphora egregia* (H. Adams, 1867) washed ashore in its special seaweed holdfast. And a live *Cryptoconchus porosus* (Burrow, 1815) which I haven't found for many years; they used to be common around northwest Nelson, but are very scarce on the east coast of the South Island – I've only had one from Kaikoura in the 40 years I've been here.

Below: Life as we find it - images captured by our roving photographer Fred Keil. Left: "Wind sculpture" - a whimsical work of mother nature at Cape Maria van Diemen featuring *Placostylus ambagiosus* and (right) *Haliotis iris* Gmelin, 1791 & *Diplocrepis puniceus* (Richardson, 1846) temporarily exposed from under a rock at Whakataki Beach, Wairarapa.

Kaikoura Giant Squid: *Architeuthis dux* Steenstrup, 1857

by Pat Lakeman

South Bay, Kaikoura is the place to have your close encounter with a giant squid! In our 2013 issue we carried Bev Elliott's story about the giant squid that was washed ashore at South Bay in February of that year. That specimen was estimated to be 11 m long and around 150 kg. In May this year, a female giant squid – reportedly even bigger – also washed in at South Bay, and it is now on display in a freezer with glass windows, at the Kaikoura Marine Centre & Aquarium. The Aquarium's Facebook page reported that it took four large strong men every bit of strength they had to lift the giant mollusc just inches off the ground.

Photo credits: Kaikoura Marine Centre and Aquarium & Marlborough Express

A Tale of Two Murexes

By Kris Woods

Since beginning serious shell collecting in the early 1990s I have maintained a special interest in the Muricidae family (its members are commonly known as murexes). In 2006 I attended the Australian National Shell Show in Sydney, participating in the competition with a display in the Worldwide Muricidae section. The display gained first place. This win, coupled with my attraction to this shell family inspired Roger to obtain a special number plate for our car.

When he checked the website for MUREX it was already taken so MUREX 1 was selected. A few years later we discovered that Jill Hayward, a member of the Whangarei Shell Club and another Muricidae enthusiast, owned the MUREX number plate. In May 2015 we attended the Whangarei Shell Club 50th Anniversary celebrations. Returning to the venue carpark after a full day, a perfect photo opportunity presented itself. The number plates were side by side.

Photo: Roger Woods

John E. du Pont: shell collector .... and murderer

by Pat Lakeman

All the shell collectors I know are remarkably nice people, but as you would expect, that isn't always the case. The 2014 film *Foxcatcher* traces the more dramatic events in the life of John Eleuthère du Pont, 1938-2010, so malacology doesn't feature, but he was at one stage influential in the world of shells and natural history. That legacy lives on through the Delaware Museum of Natural History, which he founded.

Heir to the du Pont family fortune, John du Pont began collecting birds, mammals and molluscs when he was a student. At his prep school he was president of the Science Club and voted 'most likely to succeed'. He attended the University of Miami in Florida where he studied marine biology and ornithology, and continued to build his collections. In 1957, with his sister Jean, he incorporated the Museum of Natural History in Delaware, to house his personal collections; it opened in Greenville in 1972 and he was its principal donor. It housed about 1,000,000 of his seashells and some 100,000 of his bird eggs, as well as his collection of birds.

In 1969 du Pont appointed R. Tucker Abbott to occupy the du Pont Chair of Malacology. He was to serve as Assistant Director of du Pont's museum, having spent the preceding 15 years filling the Pilsbry Chair of Malacology at the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia. In his tenure, Tucker Abbott assembled a collection and library that is reputed to be one of the 10 largest in the western hemisphere. In 1970, du Pont co-authored *The Living Volutes* with Clifton S. Weaver – a monograph of the living Volutidae of the world, and a hefty, impressive volume of which we have a copy in our club library. In its first year, du Pont's museum attracted 51,000 visitors, but 5 years later visitor numbers had halved and du Pont had begun to lose interest in it; he fired Tucker Abbott in 1977.

Despite his wealth and his interests, du Pont's life started to unravel. He was injured in a car accident and subsequently married one of his nurses in 1983, but the marriage was short-lived, with his wife alleging erratic and violent behaviour. Du Pont had developed his estate, Foxcatcher Farm, into a training ground for young athletes: triathletes, swimmers and finally, wrestlers. In 1992 he managed the USA Olympic wrestling team in Barcelona, Spain. But his biographer, C.A. Turkington, concluded that drink and drugs eventually made him mentally unstable. On 26 January 1996, he fatally shot 36 year old Olympic wrestler, Dave Schulz, who lived on du Pont's estate.

Du Pont was convicted of 3rd degree murder, and sentenced to 13-30 years in prison, where he died in 2010 aged 72. The Delaware Museum of Natural History lives on, enjoying an estimated 65,000 visitors each year. My thanks to Dr Bruce Marshall for directing my attention to this quirky tale.

Sources:

HARASEWYCH, M.G. 1997. The life and malacological contributions of R. Tucker Abbott. *The Nautilus* 110(2): 55-75.

JOHNSON, R.I. 2006. John du Pont and other Natural History Museum related murders. *Sporadic Papers on Mollusca* 1: 54-63.

TURKINGTON, C.A. 1996. The strange life of John E. du Pont. Atlanta: Turner Publishing.

WEAVER, C.S. & DU PONT, J.E. 1970. The Living volutes. Delaware Museum of Natural History.

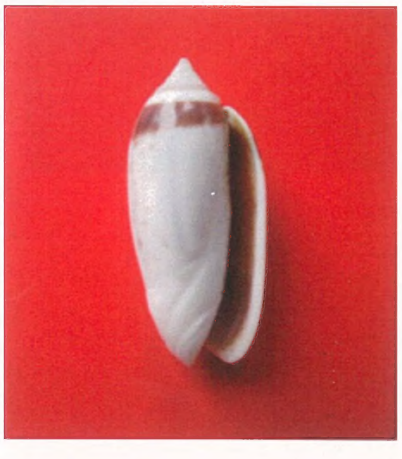
Cookia contributions are welcome

Please use the molluscan names in the Checklist of the Recent Mollusca recorded from the NZEEZ by Spencer, Willan, Marshall and Murray, which can be viewed at **http://www.molluscs.otago.ac.nz/index.html** - and check the spelling carefully. In long lists of species names, they should NOT be listed in alphabetical order but in systematic sequence (with Family headings) as in the 'Checklist'. Bruce Marshall, at Te Papa Tongarewa Museum of New Zealand, is very willing to check identifications or species names for anyone who would like his help - please take advantage of this generous offer.

Shells from Mahabalipuram Beach

by Pat Lakeman & Bert van Tiggele

Occasionally, shell collectors get a chance to explore exotic locations and, of course, we take the opportunity to look for shells. In July this year, while chatting by email to Bert van Tiggele about his finds on our 2013 Chathams trip, he told me he had just returned from one of the regular trips that he and his wife Jenny make to India. Bert and Jenny have a second home there, which they have owned for many years. Their house is near the village of Athoor, in Tamil Nadu, a large state in southern India. Tamil Nadu's capital is Chennai (formerly Madras), on the east coast about 400 km to the NE, and about 60 km south of Chennai is Mahabalipuram Beach, which Bert and Jenny visited this year. Bert sent me these attractive photos of his shell finds there – which included live *Amusium pleuronectes* (Linnaeus, 1758). Bert had not found this species before and says the ones he found live were likely brought in by fishermen. It is a species found in the Indian Ocean and from Japan to Australia, and widely fished as a food source.



Clockwise from top left: *Amusium pleuronectes* (Linnaeus, 1758); *Fusinus colus* (Linnaeus, 1758); *Architectonica laevigata* (Lamarck, 1816); *Ficus variegata* Röding, 1798; *Spondylus regius* Linnaeus, 1758; *Fusinus indicus* (Anton, 1838); *Volachlamys tranquebaria* (Gmelin, 1791); *Oliva oliva* (Linnaeus, 1758).

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Wellington Shell Club Publications

Cookia is the journal of the Wellington Shell Club and is published annually, containing articles and smaller items of interest on shells, shell collecting, and molluscs as well as other related marine topics.

Cookia was first published in 1976; prior to this the Club published a *Circular*, then a *Bulletin*, as well as occasional *Study Notes* on various families of mollusca.

PUBLICATIONS TO DATE

1956-1965 *Circular* 1 to 21

1967-1975 *Bulletin* 1 to 36

1976-1977 *Cookia* Volume 1, Nos 1, 2, 3

1977-1978 *Cookia* Volume 2, Nos 1, 2, 3

1979-1980 *Cookia* Volume 3, Nos 1, 2, 3

1980-1981 *Cookia* Volume 4, Nos 1, 2, 3

1982-1984 *Cookia* Volume 5, Nos 1, 2, 3, 4

1985-1992 *Cookia* Volume 6, Nos 1, 2, 3, 4

1993-1996 *Cookia* Volume 7, Nos 1, 2, 3, 4 [Index to 1996]

1997-2014 *Cookia* Volumes 8 - 26.

Cookia Volume 14, June 2003 is The Shell Lists issue.

Supplement to Cookia Volume 26 , December 2014 is an index of all articles in the Club publications 1956-2014.

BACK ISSUES

Back issues of *Cookia* are available, as are individual articles, and copies of the Bulletins, Circulars and Study Notes.

Order from Jill Burnet, 84 Brougham Street, Mt Victoria, Wellington 6011 New Zealand; or see our homepage at **www.wellingtonshellclub.org.nz**

The solution:

Top left: *Astraea heliotropium*, 93 mm, 40 m, Foveaux Strait. Top middle: *Pecten novaezelandiae*, 111 mm, 16 m, Parengarenga Harbour. Top right: *Calliostoma tigris*, 48 mm, 5 m, Tasman Bay. Middle left: *Bassina yatei*, 37 mm, Kapiti Coast. Middle: *Hydatina physis*, 41 mm, Rangaunu Harbour. Middle right: *Alcithoe fusus*, 70 mm, 40 m, Tasman Bay. Bottom left: *Mesopeplum convexum*, 55 mm, 40 m, Foveaux Strait. Bottom middle: *Poirieria zelandica*, 62 mm, 35 m, Tasman Bay. Bottom right: *Comitas onokeana*, 46 mm, 750 m, off Cape Palliser.